

build contracting technique is optional.

§ 636.106 [Reserved]

§ 636.107 May contracting agencies use geographic preference in Federal-aid design-build or public-private partnership projects?

No. Contracting agencies must not use geographic preferences (including contractual provisions, preferences or incentives for hiring, contracting, proposing, or bidding) on Federal-aid highway projects, even though the contracting agency may be subject to statutorily or administratively imposed in-State or local geographical preferences in the evaluation and award of such projects.

[72 FR 45336, Aug. 14, 2007]

§ 636.108 [Reserved]

§ 636.109 How does the NEPA process relate to the design-build procurement process?

The purpose of this section is to ensure that there is an objective NEPA process, that public officials and citizens have the necessary environmental impact information for federally funded actions before actions are taken, and that design-build proposers do not assume an unnecessary amount of risk in the event the NEPA process results in a significant change in the proposal, and that the amount payable by the contracting agency to the design-builder does not include significant contingency as the result of risk placed on the design-builder associated with significant changes in the project definition arising out of the NEPA process. Therefore, with respect to the design-build procurement process:

(a) The contracting agency may:

(1) Issue an RFQ prior to the conclusion of the NEPA process as long as the RFQ informs proposers of the general status of NEPA review;

(2) Issue an RFP after the conclusion of the NEPA process;

(3) Issue an RFP prior to the conclusion of the NEPA process as long as the RFP informs proposers of the general status of the NEPA process and that no commitment will be made as to any alternative under evaluation in the

NEPA process, including the no-build alternative;

(4) Proceed with the award of a design-build contract prior to the conclusion of the NEPA process;

(5) Issue notice to proceed with preliminary design pursuant to a design-build contract that has been awarded prior to the completion of the NEPA process; and

(6) Allow a design-builder to proceed with final design and construction for any projects, or portions thereof, for which the NEPA process has been completed.

(b) If the contracting agency proceeds to award a design-build contract prior to the conclusion of the NEPA process, then:

(1) The contracting agency may permit the design-builder to proceed with preliminary design;

(2) The contracting agency may permit any design and engineering activities to be undertaken for the purposes of defining the project alternatives and completing the NEPA alternatives analysis and review process; complying with other related environmental laws and regulations; supporting agency coordination, public involvement, permit applications, or development of mitigation plans; or developing the design of the preferred alternative to a higher level of detail when the lead agencies agree that it is warranted in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139(f)(4)(D);

(3) The design-build contract must include appropriate provisions preventing the design-builder from proceeding with final design activities and physical construction prior to the completion of the NEPA process (contract hold points or another method of issuing multi-step approvals must be used);

(4) The design-build contract must include appropriate provisions ensuring that no commitments are made to any alternative being evaluated in the NEPA process and that the comparative merits of all alternatives presented in the NEPA document, including the no-build alternative, will be evaluated and fairly considered;

(5) The design-build contract must include appropriate provisions ensuring that all environmental and mitigation